



# The GRANGE

Issue: 80

MAY

2000



## Mona Rankin Was Here

My name is now on a brass plaque on the back of the Chairperson's chair along with other ex-Chairpersons. I am gradually clearing a two-year accumulation of files from my desk.

The last Grange Annual General Meeting was held May 1st and I was recently at my last meeting of The Grange Council.

What I will always have are the memories of the great group of volunteers that I have enjoyed knowing so much. I will also be reminded of all of you as I wear the exquisite peony earrings and brooch you presented to me at the Annual General Meeting. The gift was a total surprise and I want to thank all the Grange volunteers for thinking of me.

May the years ahead be special ones for The Grange and for all of you who work here. - *Mona Rankin, The Grange Chair 1998-99*

## AVRIL STRINGER - The Grange Chair

The Grange research expert, Avril Stringer will become the new Chair of The Grange at The AGO Volunteer Annual General Meeting on June 5. We look forward to the next few years under Avril's encyclopedic direction.

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## JUST REWARDS

Many will be shocked to find,  
When the day of judgement nears;  
That there's a special place in heaven,  
Set aside for volunteers.

Furnished with big recliners,  
Satin couches and footstools;  
Where there's no committee chairman (person),  
No group leaders or car pools.

No eager team that needs a coach,  
No bazaar and no bake sale;  
There will be nothing there to staple,  
Not one thing to fold or mail.

Telephone lists will be outlawed,  
But a finger snap shall bring;  
Cool drinks and gourmet dinners,  
And rare treats fit for a king.

You ask, who'll serve these "Privileged Few",  
And work for all they're worth?  
Why, all those who reaped the benefits,  
And not once volunteered on earth!

*Author: Not known*

*Submitted by: Al DeMato*



Avril Stringer, second on the left, will be the new Chair of The Grange. She stands with former Grange Chairpersons, Flo Morson (1995-97), Mona Rankin (1998-99) and Elizabeth Chish-Graham (1993-94).

# The Grange Volunteer Executive 1999-2000

Past

**CHAIR**  
Mona Rankin  
(905) 727-9330

**SECRETARY**  
Catherine Stroud  
(905) 528-6156

**TREASURER/RESEARCH**  
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## COMMITTEES

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**HISTORIC KITCHENS**  
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**MODERN KITCHEN**  
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**STAFFING**  
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## DAY CAPTAINS

Monday: Jane Heinemann  
Tuesday: Elvira Putrus  
Wednesday: Cathy Stroud  
Wednesday Bridge: Helvi Hunter  
Wednesday Eve: Marg McGuigan  
Thursday: June O'Brien  
Friday: Beverley Sutton  
Saturday: Helen Brown  
Sunday: Edna Rigby

**NEWSLETTER EDITOR**  
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ASSISTANT**  
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# The Grange Volunteer Executive 2000-2001

New

**CHAIR**  
Avril Stringer  
(905) 727-9330

**SECRETARY**  
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(905) 528-6156

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## COMMITTEES

**CONTINUING EDUCATION**  
Helvi Hunter  
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**HOUSE COMMITTEE**  
Rotation of the committee  
members while Jane Heinemann absent

**HISTORIC KITCHENS**  
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**MODERN KITCHEN**  
Jane Ash & Elvira Putrus  
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**VICE CHAIR GRANGE  
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Georgette Caldwell  
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## DAY CAPTAINS

Monday: Jane Heinemann  
(on leave)  
Tuesday: Elvira Putrus  
Wednesday: Cathy Stroud  
Wednesday Bridge: Helvi Hunter  
Wednesday Eve: Marg McGuigan  
Thursday: June O'Brien  
Friday: Beverley Sutton  
Saturday: Katharine Brown  
Sunday: Edna Rigby

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## COMING EVENTS

(For a continuous record, when we want to look back, we will always include events that may actually be over by the delivery date of the newsletter.)

### **The Grange Annual General Meeting**

*Outgoing Chair: Mona Rankin  
Incoming Chair: Avril Stringer  
Date: Monday, May 1, 2000  
Music Room, The Grange*

### **AGO Volunteer Committee Annual General Meeting**

*Outgoing President: Ute Blake  
Incoming President: Wanda Dube  
Date: Monday, June 5, 2000*

**May Bus Trip** - Cancelled for this year, 2000.

## **In Memoriam** **- Helen Brown -**

It is with deep regret that we must report the death of one of our most respected and faithful volunteers, Helen Brown.

Helen, former Grange Treasurer, began her time at the AGO in the membership department in approximately 1994. By mid 1996, not only was she active in The Grange, but she had become a much loved Saturday Day Captain. She died April 21, 2000 after a short illness. She will be missed by all of us. A donation from The Grange and The Grange volunteers will be made to the Canadian Cancer Society.

## **On The Mend**

Our sympathy and best wishes are extended to Marguerite Larkin (Fri.) who is at home mending a broken collar bone.

We hope all is well and that she will be able to join us again soon.

## **REMINDER**

Please submit your news articles for the next Grange Newsletter by **August 23rd, 2000**.

For those of you who were not at the recent Annual General Meeting, I thought I would include here a summary of my remarks, because, in this address I expressed my philosophy and directions in museum work and for The Grange. There were three areas that I focused on—learning, history and heritage. Definitions of museums usually include the idea of being places of learning and of engaging the public in a learning process focused around the collection. This idea is present in the AGO vision that "we are an open and adventurous art museum, known for celebrating the pleasures of learning." As well as being a museum, The Grange is also an historic site, a place that reflects Toronto's heritage in a particular way. I believe that the task of a museum dealing with heritage and history, is to communicate relationships and tensions within society between needs, resources and traditions in both these contexts.

Keeping these three ideas in mind then, The Grange is and should be a place of learning, of history, and of heritage. This may seem obvious, but let's ask ourselves—how does learning happen here? what history are we focusing on? and, whose heritage? These three questions are not unique to The Grange, and they are particularly important when we think of our new directions as laid out in our vision document. Our answers will have an impact on where we will be and what we will be doing in the future.

So, let's spend some time looking at these three areas. How are our visitors learning? By and large, it is self-directed—it is their responsibility to move through the house and gather information in

whatever way they would like (asking questions, reading the text panels, looking at the rooms and objects). And while we aren't here to drum information into the visitors' head, or kidnap them for a lecture, I think we should explore if any learning has taken place. We also need to decide what we want the visitor to be learning—and that is tied up in the next two questions.

The second question was 'what history?' Several things have happened in the field of history over the last, approximately ten years. Scholars have developed a number of theories of history. I will not be going into them in any depth, but I think it is important to understand that the story we tell, is no longer the story historians would tell—not just because there are more facts, but because historiography has changed. These theories are coupled with the newer fields of history such as: gender, race, and class. The history of women, ethnic and aboriginal groups are now the focus of much research. We need to think about how we can incorporate this new knowledge into our presentation.

The final question was 'whose heritage?' If we accept the Oxford Dictionary definition of heritage as being "things such as works of art, cultural achievements and folklore that have been passed on from earlier generations", we begin to see that heritage is a living, changing inheritance, that will be different at different times and for different people. No museum can remain static in what it does or in what it presents. In order to fulfill our function we must be enablers providing support for the creation of personal pasts. This requires active participation by the visitor in

exploring their own past, present and future. Seen this way, museums take on the role of story teller, myth maker and imitator of reality. Now don't get me wrong here, I am not suggesting for a minute that we make up facts, but, the engagement with the visitor must take into account the "inheritance" if you like, that they are bringing with them. For example, what stories can visitors tell us of their ancestor's lives in Toronto—or elsewhere? How are both their own and their ancestor's presence seen within the context of the house? What aspect of their heritage do they both bring with them and leave behind? And, how can we encourage the visitor's exploration of their personal past? So, thinking about learning, history and heritage, what would The Grange look like if we were beginning the restoration today? What do we want it to look like in the future? While I am not certain in my own mind yet, I imagine that we will have more interpretive devices, we may re-write the text panels, add to the photo albums, bring in audio, encourage visitors to share their stories in a permanent way.

I would like to organize and work with a smaller group of you to begin some planning and to try out some things. One thing I am certain of, is that at the heart of The Grange, there will be dedicated, passionate volunteers actively involved. The Grange has already begun to move away from its first mandate which was to represent a gentleman's life in 1835, continuing to work together we will fulfill the promise described in our new vision.

I would like to wish all of you a safe and happy summer.

## Larding and Preserving with Lard

*The following is with reference to the Q & A from the March 2000 newsletter*

I would like to clear up any confusion that may have been caused by the wording of the question on "larding".

The original question had to do with the term "larder", which was, as stated, a room for storage of meat or other provisions. However, according to the Oxford Etymological Dictionary, the use of the word Larder for slaughterhouse is a figurative, rather than a literal one and therefore not relevant to The Grange.

The question as published refers to "larding", a process by which strips of fat (lardoons) are threaded through meat by means of a larding needle before cooking in order to make the meat more tender, juicy and flavourful. It is often used on game which is by nature very lean.

Preserving with lard, on the other hand, is a method used to prolong the shelf-life of meat pates or terrines. This involves pouring the melted lard or clarified butter over the surface of the cooked terrine which, on cooling, produces an air-tight seal, thus retarding spoilage and allowing full development of the flavour which takes a minimum of three days. This layer of fat is removed before serving.

Both of these processes would likely have been used in The Grange kitchens.

*Submitted by Anna Patrick, The Grange Historic Kitchens*

## ARGAND LAMP

Can you locate the Argand lamp in The Grange?

Good for you if you knew its location, but, do you know who Argand was? I didn't, so I'll share my findings with you. Aimé Argand, 1750-1803, was the superintendent of the distilleries of France under Louis XVI. He was also a great friend of the Montgolfier brothers and he acted as assistant at their first successful balloon ascension. Argand is remembered as the inventor, about 1782, of a kerosene lamp which bears his name. After its invention, the kings of England and France offered incentives to those who could manufacture it. Jefferson, Franklin and Washington immediately purchased examples.

*Submitted by: Pat Robertson*

Information from *Antiques* magazine, February, 2000

## A Word about Piers

We are all familiar with the marine type pier (breakwater). In Britain, they are found at the seaside stretching out into the sea, with entertainment offered at the end. Some are famous, Brighton for example. In Canada the pier may be a little shorter but unsurpassed as a place to sit in the evening or as a jumping off point for a swim in the lake, in the summer that is.

However, enough of daydreaming, the pier also has an architectural meaning. It refers to the wall between two windows. It is in this sense, of course, that we use it here at The Grange. By extension it also refers to the tables that stand between the windows and the looking glasses over them.. Hence pier table and pier glasses.

The pier table we have in the drawing room is American, c.1830 and was purchased in 1971 for the restoration. The pier glass over it was in the house prior to the restoration. The dining room pier table is also American, c.1835, the mirror English, c.1820, both purchased during the restoration. -Avril Stringer

Regarding the visit to St James Cathedral. The volunteers who went on the tour were invited to take a hand-out, A Day in the Life of John Strachan. Copies have been put in the Research Books and everyone is urged to read this extremely interesting hand-out. - Avril Stringer, Research

## GRANGE RECEIPTS for FAUX FOOD

It is good news that visitors are so interested and want to know more about the Faux Food on display at The Grange.

To begin, I use *Plaid Faster Plaster*. No firing is necessary and it is non-toxic. I also use *DAS Pronto*. It is an air hardening clay-like modelling material. Both of these products can be bought at Lewiscraft.

For the pies, I use a pie tin as a mould or I leave the plaster in the tin which will not show when displayed in a deep plate. The plaster is poured; and for reasons of economy and texture, I add a filler to the mixture. The filler could be pieces of material from a wool coat. This creates a texture on the surface which imitates fruit. After this is dry, I put a clay edge around the pie and then I decorate the top using pinking shears to make the cross pieces. The clay must be dried slowly. To accomplish this, I keep a slightly damp cloth over the pie for one or two days to prevent cracking.

The asparagus is made of clay. The petites fours have a filler of pieces of odds and ends from carpenter scraps. Again, this is to economize the use of clay.

The Christmas pudding and the white pudding / dessert are formed over plastic bowls and have to be handled very carefully so as not to crack.

The fish was made of plaster poured into a reservoir formed with a 'fence' of plasticine shaped like a fish. When this was dry, a piece of wood was covered with another layer of plaster. After drying, the rest of the fish was finished with clay; the clay filled in any gaps and made the surface smooth.

Finally, I use artist's oil colours to add detail. To achieve a shiny surface and for small areas, I use nail polish. Clear varnish is suggested on the package.

All of the above is trial and error, and fun to do. Not to mention, the surprise and satisfaction when it turns out to look the way you had hoped it would.

*From the creator of the Faux Food at The Grange - Joan Watson*

## Accession Book Update

The term "Grange Collection" that is listed with many of the artifacts in these books refers to those items found in the house or the AGO before the restoration. These items have no provenance but were likely donated to The Art Museum of Toronto when it began in The Grange to help furnish the house or the new galleries as they were being built.

They do not indicate items owned by the Boultons. Boulton pieces are: the sideboards in the dining room and the front hall, the coat stand, the linen press in the music room and the wardrobes in both bedrooms. The Chinese export porcelain in the corner wall cabinet of the Breakfast Parlour (the rose medallion bowl and vase set in the best bedroom might have been part of that collection) and the white china with the red trim are also Boulton pieces. -Jenny Rieger

## HALLMARKS

In the "ROM ANSWERS" section of the Spring 2000 issue of *Rotunda* magazine, Dr. Peter Kaellgren, Curator of Decorative Arts with his reply to a query regarding a hip flask, includes some interesting information on silver hallmarks and their history. Dr. Kaellgren emphasizes that there has been rigorous quality control on British silver since the Middle Ages. All pieces were subject to assay, and the hallmark included a symbol for the city of assay office, a mark of the maker, manufacturer or retailer a letter for the year and a mark indicating the standard of the metal. The usual standard for British silver was 92.5 percent pure silver shown by a lion passant (walking, and looking to the right side, with three paws on the ground and the right fore-paw raised). These rigorous standards were necessary, as sometimes in times of war or other dire

events, a shortage of coins occurred and the pieces would be melted down to alleviate the problem. Guild members not complying with standards of quality or workmanship could be fined.

Dr. Kaellgren goes on, "British hallmarks are among the easiest to decipher because the marking system was well established by the 1700s and most silver found on the market (today) dates to later than that."

Some pieces are, of course, not sterling silver but have only a thin layer of silver over another metal. This layer is applied with an electric current, hence electroplating.

In Europe and Russia silver content was often lower and not as regulated. From 1870, most pieces were 80 to 83 percent pure silver and marked as such.

In Canada and the U.S. "sterling" has become the most common mark since the 1860s.

(with permission - *Rotunda magazine*) - Avril Stringer, Research